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Journalism 101: Buy an iPhone

The New York Times reported Monday that a news portal website in San Francisco is hoping the iPhone-equipped, tech-savvy generation will speed the growth and influence of its news presence in the Bay Area and beyond.

The website, Fwix, is joining numerous other similar sites in offering an application designed specifically for iPhone users that will facilitate the uploading of news, photos, videos and other news-worthy submissions to the site's newswire. The owners of Fwix hope that empowering aspiring reporters in this way will widen the net of potential "on the scene" instantaneous reporting from events around town and around the world. Eyewitnesses can send in reports at the speed of the internet from anything as mundane as a convenience store grand opening to something as life changing as an earthquake.



Fwix reports 400,000 monthly visitors to its site, but as many as eight million view the headlines it offers on other sites. Fwix's founder, Darian Shirazi, is a child of the era of Twitter and sees his overture to the iPhone set as a springboard to greater saturation of the congested news and information highway and believes that the army of i-reporters will carry Fwix's banner and make it the "real-time local newswire."

Rather than being the sole source of breaking news, Shirazi and his backers see the user-uploaded contributions as providing crucial texture and insight that will enrich the common, bland, text-driven stories offered by traditional news sites. The ultimate goal, apparently, is to make Fwix a rival to the Associated Press and other widely broadcast purveyors of breaking news. The key to that success is the regular and reliable participation of unpaid amateurs who find themselves in the right place, at the right time, and with the right software.

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